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HEIRS OF GRACE.

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A

SERMON,

DELIVERED AT CHARLESTOWN, SEPTEMBER 26, 1813,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

MRS. ABIGAIL COLLIER,

CONSORT OF THE

REV. WILLIAM COLLIER,

PASTOR OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH IN SAID TOWN.

.....

BY THOMAS BALDWIN, D. D.

.....

WITH

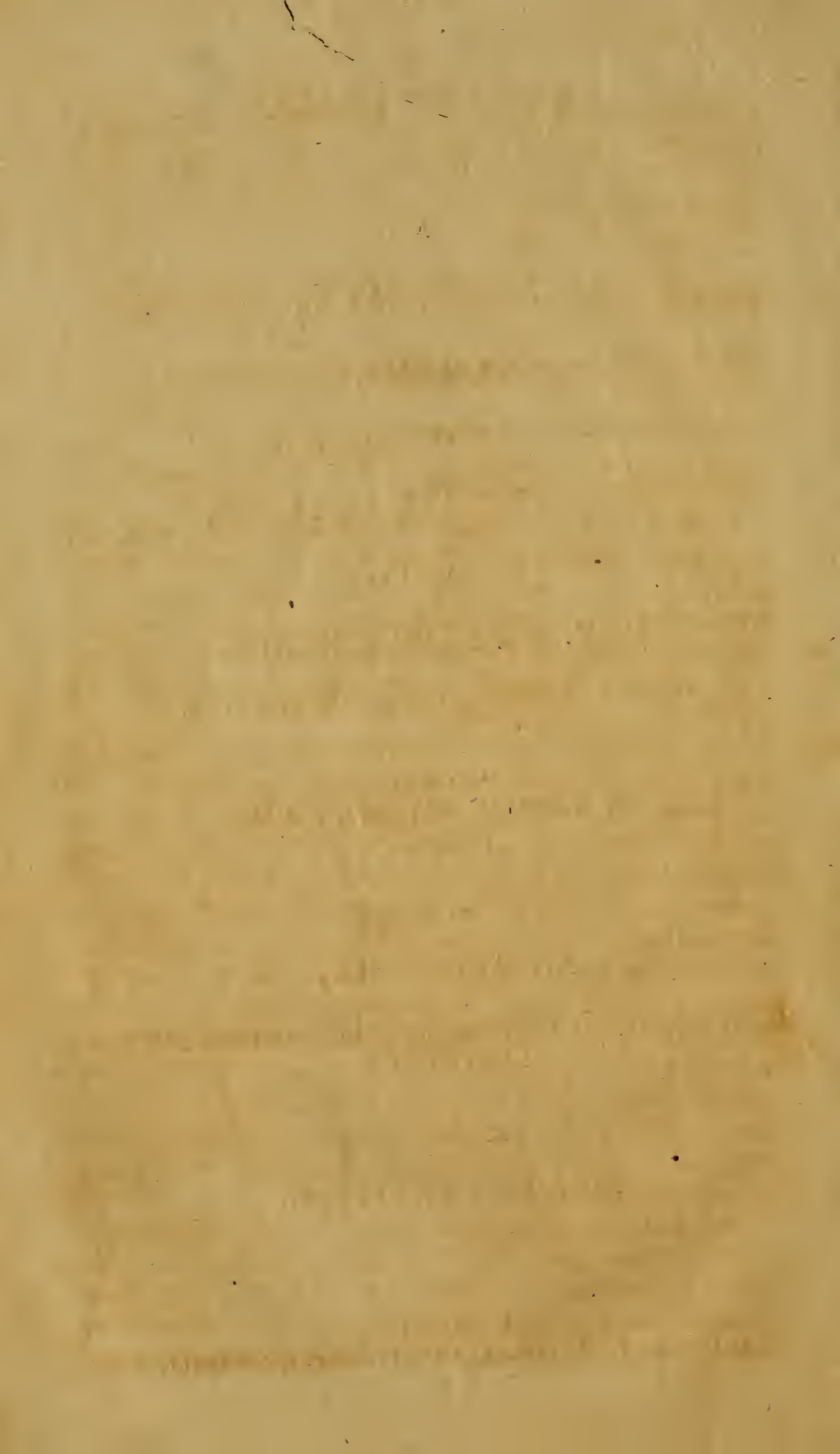
AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING EXTRACTS FROM MRS. COLLIER'S DIARY,
LETTERS, &c.

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SERMON.

1 PETER, III. 7.

“BEING HEIRS TOGETHER OF THE GRACE OF LIFE.”

MUCH of our present happiness is derived from our social relations. These relations result from nature, or are formed by the sympathetic power of friendship. Natural affection like all other streams descends downward: hence the love of parents to their children is usually much stronger than that of children to their parents.

The relation which subsists between the wedded pair, is undoubtedly the dearest and most perfect of all earthly ties. This connexion, founded in mutual affection and cemented by a thousand endearing acts of friendship, leads the parties by an irresistible impulse to seek each other's happiness. Where the affections of the heart unite with the dictates of the understanding in forming this union; and, above all, where religion sheds its heavenly influence, making them *one in Christ*, and enabling them to walk as “heirs together of the grace of life,” they enjoy a friendship which approximates to the blessedness of the heavenly state. Where the marriage union is thus formed, we may adopt the scripture language, and say, “of twain they now are ONE.”

But friendship, however sacred, is liable to be interrupted. Our dearest friends are not suffered to continue by reason of death: we shall die and leave them, or they will be taken from us: but blessed be God, though they must be separated from us for a sea-

son, nothing shall finally separate them from the love of Christ. Nor shall they long be separated from each other. A few revolving suns, and those who have thus been united on earth will meet again in a better world, far away from these regions of sorrow and death!

That we may, however, enter more fully into the apostle's views in the text, it is proposed,

I. To show what we are to understand by the "grace of life."

II. I shall attempt to show what is implied in being "*heirs* of the grace of life." And,

III. Shall notice some of the blessings and advantages resulting from this relation.

We proceed, then, first, to show, what we are to understand by the *grace of life*.

By this expression, there can be no doubt but the apostle intends that grace which is revealed in the gospel, and which raises the soul from a state of spiritual death, and which re-instates it in the enjoyment of spiritual and eternal life. That grace which frees the soul from the love and dominion of sin in the present world, and from final condemnation in the next. Spiritual life does not consist merely in the enjoyment of God, nor in a capacity to enjoy him; but in a disposition to love and serve him, with right affections and desires, manifested in holy activity in the ways of religion. Hence the grace of life may be considered as comprising the following things:

1. A principle of spiritual life implanted in the soul, in regeneration.

The production of this holy principle in the heart, is most evidently an act of the *sovereign grace of God*. The soul is wholly *passive* in regeneration. It is God who "creates in us a clean heart, and renews a right spirit within us." It is he, who, by the gracious influences of his Spirit, takes away the hard and impenitent heart, called a "*heart of stone*," and gives a penitent, feeling, believing heart, called a "*heart of flesh*." Creature efforts could never effect this important

change. No one can redeem a guilty brother, or give to God a ransom for his own soul. But God our Saviour, raises up and quickens whomsoever he will. Hence the implantation of this gracious principle may be considered as the grace of life begun in the soul.

As grace is a living, active principle, it is very properly called the *grace of life* ; for it is from this principle that all spiritual life and activity proceeds. The soul remains dead in trespasses and sins, without any symptoms of divine life, until this grace is imparted.

But, 2. The same grace which renews the soul, acts efficiently in preserving and promoting the spiritual life of believers. Christians have no inherent power either to resist the allurements of the world, or to advance in the heavenly life ; but are wholly dependent for daily supplies of grace upon Christ their spiritual head. The gracious Redeemer never disappoints the reasonable expectations of any who put their trust in him : but when he sees their strength is gone, and they are shut up, and none to help, he giveth more grace, and encourages them to persevere by assuring them, that “ his grace is sufficient for them.”

The stream is not more dependent on the fountain, than the believer is on Christ, for all his strength and comfort. If at any time he is left to presume upon his own strength, he is soon made to feel his weakness.

The sincere Christian, though an heir of grace, is not freed from temptation, from the cruel assaults of Satan ; and oftentimes, like the apostle, seems to be pressed out of measure, so as almost to despair of life ; but in these trying moments he is buoyed up by the gracious declaration of the Saviour ; “ Because I live, ye shall live also.”

3. The believer is not only dependent on the grace of God for the commencement and continuance of spiritual life, but for its completion in glory : his present state is a state of preparation. Here his knowledge and enjoyment are both imperfect ; but there “ he shall know even as he is known.” “ Here he sees through a glass darkly, but there face to face.”

Here he enjoys only an earnest or foretaste of heaven; but there he will be admitted to the full fruition and everlasting enjoyment of the inheritance of the saints in light. This inheritance is by faith, to the end that it might be sure to all the heirs. We have therefore the most assured confidence, that "grace will complete what grace begins;" for "God is a rock: his work is perfect."

Let us judge nothing before the time. If the work of grace in the heart of the believer is at present imperfect, let us remember it is progressive; and we rest "confident of this self-same thing, that he who hath begun a good work in his people, will carry it on until the day of Jesus Christ," when the Saviour will present to the view of all holy beings "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing."

Thus it appears, that by *the grace of life* mentioned in the text, we are to understand that grand economy of grace revealed in the gospel, by which sinners dead in trespasses and sins are raised up, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Being thus quickened by grace, they are alive to all the spiritual duties and pleasures of religion.

We proceed,

II. To show what is implied in being "heirs" of this grace.

The most natural acceptation of the word heir, is one who succeeds to the inheritance of another. This appears to be the sense in which it is used in the text.

But in what is our heirship to the grace of life founded? Not surely in lineal descent; for the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham and his seed *through the law*, but through the righteousness of faith. The Jews were involved in this error, and hence concluded, that because they were the children of Abraham, therefore they were entitled to all the blessings of heaven. But our Lord assured them, that if they were the *spiritual* children of Abraham, they would do the works of Abraham.

Nor is this heirship founded in our own obedience either to the law or the gospel. The most exact obedience to the law will never entitle men to the grace of life. Whoever should perfectly obey the law, would be entitled to life, but it would have nothing to do with grace.

The plain answer to the question then is, that we are made heirs of the grace of life, only by the *spirit of adoption*. All grace is treasured up in Christ; for it hath pleased the Father, that in him all fullness should dwell. By adoption, we become children of God, and *if children, then heirs*; consequently by adoption we are brought into union with the whole family of God, and to a participation in all the privileges of the household of faith.

If our title be well founded, it will be seen in that gracious heavenly temper, which is formed in the soul in regeneration. This temper is what St. Paul calls the spirit of Christ, *i. e.* a spirit like Christ, and without which we are none of his. Without this, it will be in vain to think of enjoying heaven. This is the only scriptural ground on which our title of heirship can be supported. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

The land of Canaan was a type of heaven. This, by the gracious act of God, was given to Abraham and his seed, of whom it is said, "by faith he sojourned in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the *heirs* with him of the same promise." *This* heirship was founded in the gracious promise of God, antecedent to any act of obedience in the patriarch.

I know of nothing which can witness to us that we are heirs of the grace of life, but a true and saving faith in Christ. If this can be clearly ascertained, it will remove every doubt respecting our title. "For ye are all the children of God (said an apostle) by faith in Christ Jesus." And *if children, then HEIRS; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*. This en-

titles us to all the privileges and promises of the new and everlasting covenant. We now pass,

III. To notice some of the privileges and advantages enjoyed by those who are *heirs together of the grace of life*.

It was an observation of one of the wisest of men, that "two are better than one." We can hardly suppose man, who was formed with a social nature, to have been completely blessed while alone, though in paradise. The all-merciful Creator saw his solitary condition, and provided a *help meet** for him. But the endearing pleasures of conjugal friendship are never enjoyed in their highest degree, but where the parties are *heirs together of the grace of life*. Religion gives a lustre to all the social virtues, and sweetens every endearment of domestic life. Whatever happiness may be enjoyed without possessing true religion, those only who are the subjects of it can enjoy all the advantages contemplated in the text.

These advantages are numerous. We have time only to notice a few. And,

1. Where the heads of a family are "heirs together of the grace of life," it will tend greatly to promote their *personal religion*. It is rational to suppose that they must feel a deeper interest in each other's happiness, than though their friendship were to terminate with the present life. Proportionably as they value the enjoyment of religion in their own souls, they will feel concerned for its growth in the soul of a beloved companion. They will more deeply partake of the joys and sorrows of each other, than those who are strangers to the fellowship of the gospel. They will delight to unbosom their inmost souls to each other; and, by a mutual participation of their pleasures and pains, render their passage through life much more pleasant and delightful. With what tender solicitude will they watch over and apprise each other of approaching danger! How often will they endeavour to encourage and strengthen one another's hands in their

* A *help* suitable for him.

Christian course. How much to be prized are the faithful reproofs, and gentle admonitions of such a bosom friend ! What a solace does the afflicted heart enjoy in the tender sympathies of a faithful companion in the day of adversity ! Being mutually affected, they bow, and weep, and adore, and “talk of all his righteous judgments” together.

2. When the heads of a family are heirs together of the grace of life, it has the most happy tendency in promoting *family religion*. It has often happened, where one of the parties has not been religiously inclined, family worship has been greatly embarrassed, if not wholly neglected. This is particularly referred to in the context. “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, *that your prayers be not hindered.*” What a hindrance to family prayer has an irreligious companion often proved, to a pious man ! What a dead weight upon all his attempts to engage in this important duty !

How affecting is the situation of that family, where no morning and evening sacrifice is offered up ! Where no sins are lamented and confessed, and where no blessings are implored ! Have not such families reason to tremble, lest the awful imprecation of the prophet should be realized, and the *fury* of a neglected God be poured upon them ?* On the other hand,

What an interesting sight is a pious praying family ! How solemn and delightful, to see parents and children kneeling together around the family altar ! Who that should witness such a scene, but would be led to exclaim,

Blest is the pious house,
Where zeal and friendship meet ;
Their songs of praise, their mingled vows,
Make their communion sweet.

The apostolic salutation might with propriety be addressed to such a family ;—*Peace be to this house !* Nor

* Jer. x. 25.

can it be doubted, but that the peace of God rests upon them.

3. Where the heads of a family walk together as heirs of the grace of life, their example will in all probability have a very powerful and happy effect upon their children and domestics. If it should not be perceived immediately, we are not to despair of its ultimate success. Reflection has often called up the pious counsels and warnings of godly parents, long after they have been laid in the dust. The impressive language of their example will be heard and felt; and if children and those under their care are not made better by it, it is their own fault. But how often have pious parents been comforted, in having their prayers answered in their life-time, with blessings on the heads of their offspring. Many have had the joy of soul, of seeing their children walking in the truth.

4. Religious families are of incalculable advantage to the neighbourhoods where they live. Their steady, amiable example will serve to check and discountenance the vicious, and to encourage and assist such as are virtuously inclined. Where the heads of a family are "both righteous, walking in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless;" where their daily conduct and conversation show that they have been with Jesus, they may indeed be considered as lights in the world, and as the salt of the earth. Their holy living will more effectually commend the gospel to those around them, than all the noisy declamation of pharasaical zealots. It is godly example which discountenances vice, and "puts to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

Such families are often the occasion of much good to society, by inviting and encouraging religious meetings in the neighbourhood where they live. These meetings have often been blessed to many, and not unfrequently issued in very extensive reformatations. No wonder then that it is said, "the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance:" for many no doubt will bless God to eternity, for having brought

them to an acquaintance with such pious characters, by which they were first allured to the paths of truth and holiness.

We proceed in the

5th, and last place, to notice another unspeakable advantage arising from this heirship in grace, at the hour of death.

In addition to all the pleasures and advantages derived from it in life, it removes in a great measure the distress which would otherwise fill the mind, when death is about to dissolve their earthly connexion.

In this trying hour, it must be an unspeakable consolation, both to the dying and to the living, to reflect, that as they have been heirs together of the grace of life, and have walked hand in hand the road to heaven; so they may indulge the animating hope, that they shall ere long meet again in that better world, to part no more forever.

How interesting the thought, when taking leave of a dying friend, with whom we have long enjoyed the most endearing intimacy and union, that "neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come," can separate us forever. But shall we be able to recognize our friends, when we meet them in the world of spirits? This is a question often asked. In answer, I will only observe, that Moses and Elias appear to have been recognized by the disciples when they conversed with Jesus on mount Tabor. It is also said, that "many shall come from the East and from the West, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." If these venerable patriarchs could not be distinctly known, what satisfaction could it be to sit with them, more than to sit in heaven with other saints without them?

Heirs of grace, when called to part, do not take an everlasting adieu. To them, "dying is but going home." And although they are not usually permitted to go together, yet they are comforted with the thought that they shall soon meet again in the world of glory, and together enter upon their inherit-

ance among the saints in light. Here they will behold the face of God our Saviour, and dwell together in his presence, where is fulness of joy, and at his right hand, where are pleasures forevermore.

The subject thus briefly discussed naturally suggests the two following reflections.

1. How deeply affecting is the situation of such families as live under the sound of the gospel, and yet remain strangers to its vital influence! That those whom God has placed as the natural guardians and instructors of their tender offspring, and others committed to their care, should not themselves be heirs of the grace of life! To such families, all the advantages we have been considering, are lost. Their example, as far as its influence extends, goes to prove to all around them, that religion is unworthy of their regards. Should children, from seeing their parents thus live in the neglect of religion, draw this fatal conclusion, and be lost at last,—what an aggravated condemnation must such parents feel when called to give up their final account?

However amiable such persons may be in other respects, and whatever else they may possess, “one thing is needful” to complete their present, and to secure their future happiness. Without true godliness, they must in the end be miserable. Their softest songs of harmony will only be a preface to their plagues.

2. How unspeakably happy the family, “whose *hearts and hopes* are one.” How desirable, then, that those who are united in the tenderest ties of conjugal affection, and who are to accompany each other while journeying in this vale below, should also be *heirs together of the grace of life*! I have no doubt but it is the earnest prayer of all who are interested in the salvation of the gospel themselves, that their friends, especially their dear companions, should be partakers of the same grace.

The thought of parting with a dear friend, though for a little season, is exceedingly painful; but who

could endure the thought of an everlasting separation. But the heirs of grace are freed from these gloomy fears. They look for brighter scenes beyond the vale of death. There they hope to meet, and take possession of that kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. A kingdom wherein dwelleth righteousness and peace, and where sin, and sorrow, and death were never known. O glorious state of never-ending bliss!

You have undoubtedly, my hearers, perceived in the foregoing remarks, a direct bearing upon the painful dispensation of Divine Providence towards your beloved Pastor, in the removal of his amiable and pious companion, in the course of the past week.

As you have often experienced his tender sympathies in the day of your calamity, his affecting situation now calls for yours. The loss of such a companion, of such a mother, of such a friend, is to him and his children unspeakably great. But he sorrows not as those that have no hope. *His* loss is undoubtedly *her* gain. For a number of years they have indeed walked together as heirs of the grace of life. Heaven has now seen fit to part them for a little season; but they will ere long meet again, where their union will be more perfect, and more permanent.

Mrs. Collier was the daughter of Mr. Ephraim and Mrs. Abigail Robbins, of Hartford, in Connecticut. She was born on the 10th of August, 1778. Her pious parents took proper care of her early education; nor were they less solicitous to bring her up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." She appears to have been blessed with a most amiable and lovely disposition. This peculiar sweetness of temper was accompanied with a natural cheerfulness and vivacity, which, with the gracefulness of her person and elegance of her manners, could not fail to endear her to all who were acquainted with her.

When at the age of about twenty, she gave hopeful evidence of a change of heart; and in January, 1799,

made a public profession of religion, and gave herself up as a member of the Baptist church in Hartford.

On the 10th of August, 1799, she became the wife of the Rev. Mr. Collier. She was happily qualified for the various duties of her station, which she conscientiously discharged with the utmost integrity and uprightness. In her, *the heart of her husband safely trusted, for she did him good and not evil all the days of her life.* She was truly a helper of his joy; for they walked hand in hand together, as heirs of the grace of life.

Mrs. C. was equally amiable in her intercourse with society, in the domestic circle, and in her relations to the church of Christ. Her love to the Redeemer was conspicuous in her whole deportment. She appeared to be eminently adorned with the "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," which enabled her to preserve a happy equanimity of temper amidst the shifting trying scenes of life. With the solicitude of the tender mother, she mingled the anxious concern of the Christian, for the souls of her beloved offspring: Her unwearied endeavours to imbue their tender minds with the first principles of religion, are honourable testimonials of her unfeigned piety.

In speaking of persons deceased, we are often obliged to gather up every fragment of their lives, which has the least appearance of virtue, in order to make out a character any ways decent; but in the present case, we behold every virtue which can give lustre and beauty to the female character exhibited in real life. The religion of the gospel had happily prepared her for the hour of adversity. She knew whom she had believed, and was *persuaded that he was able to keep that which she had committed to him until that day.* She looked undismayed to that solemn period, when "the final states of all the dead" shall be determined.

During her last illness, she possessed the same happy equanimity of mind, and manifested the same devout resignation to the Divine will, which had been so apparent in days of health and prosperity.

The scene is now closed ! Unfading Goodness has seen fit to remove her from a world of sin and imperfection ! To remove her, too, just in the meridian of life and usefulness ! To short-sighted mortals, how mysterious the event ! How dark and frowning such a providence ! But it becomes us to be still, and know that the Judge of all the earth cannot do otherwise than right. Religion does not render us insensible to suffering, but invites us to roll our burdens upon the Lord, and assures us that he will sustain us.

The afflicted state of your beloved Pastor, my dear hearers, calls for your tenderest sympathies. I know you pity him, for you perceive that "the hand of God hath touched him," and taken away the desire of his eyes with a stroke. Their friendship was mutual and divine, for they were *heirs together of the grace of life*. None but such as have felt the united force of natural and divine friendship can fully participate in his sorrow. To such he seems to say,

"Ye sacred mourners of a nobler mould,
 "Born for a friend, whose dear embraces hold
 "Beyond all nature's ties ; you, that have known
 "Two happy souls made intimately one,
 "And felt a parting stroke ; 'tis you must tell
 "The smart, the twinges, and the racks I feel :
 "This soul of mine that dreadful wound has borne ;
 "Off from its side its dearest half is torn ;
 "The rest lies bleeding, and but lives to mourn."

May the consolations of God, which are neither few nor small, be abundantly afforded to our bereaved brother, to the afflicted parents and children, to all the numerous relatives and friends ; and may God grant, that they all may be heirs together of the grace of life, so that they may finally meet in the heavenly Jerusalem, and go no more out forever. AMEN.

APPENDIX.

MRS. COLLIER'S mind was impressed with the great subject of religion at a very early period of life. When she was about nine years of age, it pleased God to pour out of his Spirit in Suffield, where the family then resided. Several of her sisters, during that revival, were numbered with the trophies of victorious grace. It was also discovered that the concerns of another world occupied many of her thoughts and much of her time. In conversation upon her state as a sinner under bondage to the law of God, and her soul-satisfying views of a Saviour's love, she gave good evidence that a saving change was then wrought in her heart, by the Spirit of God. On a certain occasion, while several of the family were engaged in conversation upon religious subjects, those who had been brought out of darkness into marvellous light, were exhorting others to come to Christ, she began to speak a new language, and feelingly joined with her sister, several years since deceased, who was then, in melting strains, inviting the younger members of the family to believe in Jesus, that they might have eternal life. From that time, she discovered such a meek and heavenly temper, that her parents and others felt a comfortable persuasion that she also had passed from death unto life. After this, she was frequently observed to drop a silent, pensive tear. At one time, being asked why she wept, her reply was, "I fear I am going back into the world again." She was asked if she found any thing in the world, which inclined her to give it the preference to religion? She replied, with great tenderness, "O no! but I do not feel so happy in my mind as I have felt." By such conflicts she plainly discovered the Christian warfare, even at this early period of life. She was encouraged to believe, if she preferred Christ and religion to the world, he would keep her from the evils of it.

After this, however, by degrees she appeared less interested in divine things till the glorious revival of religion began in Hartford in the autumn of 1798. At that period, she was much exercised in her mind concerning her future state. She told one of her sisters, at a time when sleep was a stranger, by

reason of her anxieties, that nothing grieved her so much as ingratitude to God. Her distress was great, and it appears to have been of the noble, ingenuous kind. She was as desirous to be holy as she was to be happy. After several weeks of despondency she was set at liberty in her mind. She was then truly filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Her exercises were elevated above the world. She spake with great composure and delight of her views of the heavenly state, the glories of the Saviour, and of the employment of the happy spirits around his throne, who were continually crying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God almighty. She read the 4th chapter of Revelation, and her observations upon it, particularly the four last verses, were very impressive. She seemed to have her mind filled with adoration, love and praise, and expressed, in humble confidence, a hope, that she should one day join the happy throng around the throne of God, and crown Jesus Lord of all. Sleep departed from her eyes : she had no inclination to retire, but called upon others to help her to praise the Lord. Thus she spent the night, accompanied by one of her sisters, in exercises of devotion ; and at day-break, when it was suggested that it might be duty to retire to rest, her feelings and language were,

“ How can I sleep, while angels sing.”

Her cup ran over, and her speech was humble adoration and praise. In a letter to her sister before mentioned, she expressed the exercises of her mind at the period above referred to, in the following manner :

Hartford, Dec. 29, 1798.

MY DEAR ———,

Will you *permit me to address you in a different language from what you have been accustomed to hear from me?* But how shall I begin to tell the wonders which have been wrought in our family since you left us? You doubtless recollect that my two eldest brothers were thoughtful respecting their future state, when you was in this place. They were more and more impressed, till, on Thanksgiving-day, ***** returned from church with a new song in his mouth, even praise to his Redeemer. ***** soon joined him : and now you may picture to yourself the situation of us who were left. It immediately put me upon thinking ; but I felt tolerably easy, till I saw my youngest sister seriously determined to seek that happiness which our brothers so warmly recommended to us. I believe this was instrumental in giving me a sight of my condition. I saw that I had never enjoyed a moment of my life ; the pleasures of this world appeared a mere blank, and I found I was utterly unable to help myself. I had indeed heard a message of salvation,

but, alas, it appeared no message of salvation to me. I feared that I had so long slighted the calls and invitations of the gospel, that I should find no place for repentance, though I sought it carefully with tears. I remained in this situation a number of days, till I gave up all hope of help from any created being—found myself hopeless and helpless: to go back, was death—to go forward, I could see nothing but destruction; but, glory to my Redeemer, my short distress was judged enough. I now fancied I saw some rays of light, and found myself in some degree encouraged to hope there was mercy with Christ, even for me. This was on Friday last. On Saturday evening, I attended a conference at ———; the chapter was read which gives an account of a certain man who made a great supper, and bade many, and he sent the servants at supper-time to say unto them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready; and they began with one consent to make excuses. This appeared to me a representation of the glorious gospel feast, which is spread for every creature; and those excuses appeared so untimely, and a matter so deeply to be lamented, that I believe it engaged my whole attention. Indeed, as it respected myself, I found every obstacle removed; and I had nothing to do but to go in; or I will rather say, “the same love that spread the feast sweetly forced me in;” and I now felt unspeakably happy. It was a new kind of happiness, superior to any enjoyment that I had ever conceived of before: it was as if my whole soul had gone out of itself in love to my Creator and Redeemer. Every thing appeared in perfect harmony around me, and I felt myself free indeed. My youngest sister soon joined me in singing redeeming grace and dying love; and a number of other young Misses united in this new song. My dear sister, I long to have you

“ — Come to this Physician;
His help he'll freely give:
He makes no hard condition;
’Tis only look and live.”

“ Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine, and milk without money and without price.”

January 1, 1799.

I have now, my dear, taken my pen to wish you a happy new year, and to tell you that I am unwilling to delay any longer recommending to you that happiness which I so highly prize. I trust, through grace, I can assure you that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and I believe all her paths are peace. You have frequently heard me speak of happiness as attainable by very few, and those the peculiar favourites of fortune. Those things which I would recommend are indeed

peculiar favours, but they are bestowed upon those who have no money, might, nor power, so that no one need to despair. Those enjoyments satisfy the rational soul, and I am confident that nothing else will. I must beg of you to excuse my long letter, and accept it as a token of friendship.

From your affectionate

ABBY ROBINS.

The following extracts, however, from her diary will shew that these happy frames and feelings did not always continue ; but she was subject to seasons of darkness and despondency.

Jan. 2, '99. O the anxiety which now possesses my breast ! and what is the cause ? But a few hours since all was peaceful and happy.

Sometimes my Lord his face doth hide,
To make me pray, and kill my pride ;
Yet on my mind it still doth dwell,
My Jesus hath done all things well.

Jan. 3. Behold, I am vile ! Help, Lord, for vain is the help of man.

Jan. 4. All is still dark within ; but rejoice not over me, O mine enemy ! Though I fall I shall rise again. I will hope in God, for I shall yet praise him.

Jan. 5.

Jesus rules in heav'n and earth,
And, blessed be his name,
I trust he'll yet redeem from death,
And put my foes to shame.

Lord's Day, Jan. 6: This day I heard Mr. ***** preach an excellent sermon from Gal. v. 1. Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. I now feel as if I could rejoice in the Lord ; but I find my heart so deceitful that I frequently call those enjoyments in question, and fear they are all a deception. This has been the case for a number of days. I have given up all for loss again and again. This evening I attended a conference meeting. The 10th chapter of John was read and considered, in which our blessed Saviour speaks of his sheep, and their happy state. Many of those who heard him, said, he hath a devil and is mad ; but others said, these are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind ? I looked about me, and saw that my eyes were indeed opened to see unspeakable beauty in those things in which once I could see no form or comeliness. God's word and people appeared precious to my soul. I could sweetly feast my eyes and heart on what I then saw and heard. When these words were read—Can a devil open the eyes of the blind ? they appeared to be spoken to me, *i. e.* they struck my mind so forcibly, that I felt disposed to give God the glory for what I had before feared was a deception from the

tempter : and now think I can again sweetly rejoice in God my Saviour.

Jan. 9. I can now look with a suitable indifference upon the frowns and flatteries of the world ; and shall I any longer neglect confessing my Saviour's name before men. If ye love me, keep my commandments. Arise, and be baptized—why tarriest thou, are words which have been considerably in my mind.

His institutions will I prize,
Take up the cross, the shame despise ;
Dare to defend his noble cause,
And yield obedience to his laws.

Jan. 10. May I not say, the Lord is my portion, what can I want more ? The soul that is not satisfied with this, deserves to be eternally poor !

Friday, 11th. Invited to visit at ———. I am sure I can say with Dr. Watts,

Friend, should the towers of Windsor and Whitehall
Spread open their inviting gates to make my entertainment gay,
I would obey the royal call, but short should be my stay,
Since a diviner service waits t' employ my hours at home, and better
fill the day.

Saturday, 12th. A serious day ! How solemn the ordinance of Baptism ; but yet how pleasant the path.

Thus it became the Prince of Grace,
And thus should all the favour'd race
High heav'n's behest fulfil.

Lord's Day, Jan. 13.

Here, Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do.

This day, in obedience to the commands of my dear Redeemer, with a cheerful heart and willing steps do I walk to my watery tomb. Accept, O Lord, my feeble attempts to serve thee. O may I die to sin, and rise to newness of life and new obedience. What condescension in the Redeemer, to leave such an example for those who wish to testify their love to him.

O sacred rite, by thee the name
Of Jesus we to own begin ;
This is our resurrection pledge,
Pledge of the pardon of our sin.

She was baptized by her brother in law, Rev. S. S. Nelson, then pastor of the Baptist church in Hartford.

Monday, 14. Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.

Tuesday, 15. My soul doth magnify the Lord, and I think I can sweetly rejoice in God my Saviour. O that men would praise the Lord, for his goodness and his wonderful works to the children of men. This day I receive a visit from some

young friends at a distance. O that they could join me in praising redeeming love. I am sure I do not wish to have my name any higher among men than a crucified Saviour. I prize the reproaches of the gospel above all that men call honour.

Wednesday, 16. Through the unmerited goodness of the Lord, another day smiles upon the most unworthy. O that I could be more and more moulded into the divine image. May I be washed from every sin, and clothed with the Redeemer's righteousness : in his worthiness alone I desire to be accepted.

Saturday, 19. How unworthy am I to be numbered amongst Christ's people, though they welcome me to a place with them ! While I sit with my brethren and sisters, I feel myself less than the least of all saints. If I am one whom it hath pleased the Lord to own, it is all of grace, sovereign grace. I am sure he is worthy of all the adoration and praise of men and angels.

Lord's Day, Jan. 20. What shall I render unto the Lord for his goodness, which extends even to me the most unworthy of his creatures ! Surely the service of my whole life can add nothing to his essential happiness ; yet I desire at this time solemnly to dedicate myself to him, praying that every moment of my future life may be devoted to his service, who is worthy of all praise and adoration.

" Eternal and ever-blessed God ! I desire to present myself before thee, with the deepest humiliation and abasement of soul, sensible how unworthy such a sinful worm is to appear before the holy Majesty of heaven, the King of kings, and Lord of lords ; and especially on such an occasion as this, even to enter into a covenant transaction with thee. But the scheme and plan is thine own. Thine infinite condescension hath offered it by thy Son, and thy grace hath inclined my heart to accept it.

" I come, therefore, acknowledging myself to have been a very great offender, smiting on my breast, and saying with the humble publican, God be merciful to me a sinner ! I come, invited by the name of thy Son, and wholly trusting in his perfect righteousness ; entreating that for his sake thou wilt be merciful to my unrighteousness, and wilt not remember my sins. Receive, I beseech thee, thy revolted creature, who is now convinced of thy right to her, and desires nothing so much as that she may be thine.

" This day do I, with the utmost solemnity, surrender myself to thee : I renounce all former lords that have had dominion over me ; and I consecrate to thee all that I am, and all that I have ; the faculties of my mind, the members of my body, my

worldly possessions, my time, and my influence over others, to be all used entirely for thy glory, and resolutely employed in obedience to thy commands, as long as thou continuest me in life ; with an ardent desire and humble resolution to continue thine, through the endless ages of eternity : ever holding myself in an attentive posture to observe the first intimations of thy will, and ready to spring forward with zeal and joy to the immediate execution of it.

“ To thy direction also I resign myself and all I have and am, to be disposed of by thee in such a manner as thou shalt in thine infinite wisdom judge most subservient to thy glory. To thee I leave the management of all events, and say without reserve, not my will, but thine be done ! Rejoicing with a loyal heart in thine unlimited government, as what ought to be the delight of the whole rational creation.

“ Use me, O Lord, I beseech thee, as an instrument in thy service ! Number me among thy peculiar people ! Let me be washed in the blood of thy dear Son ! Let me be clothed with his righteousness ! Let me be sanctified by his Spirit ! Transform me more and more into his image ! Impart to me, through him, all needful influences of thy purifying, cheering, and comforting Spirit ; and let my life be spent under these influences, and in the light of thy gracious countenance, as my Father and my God !

“ And when the solemn hour of death comes, may I remember this thy covenant well ordered in all things, and sure, as all my salvation, and all my desire, though every other hope and enjoyment is perishing ! And do thou, O Lord, remember it too ! Look down with pity, O my heavenly Father, on thy languishing, dying child ! Embrace me in thine everlasting arms ! Put strength and confidence into my departing spirit ; and receive it to the abodes of them that sleep in Jesus, peacefully and joyfully to wait the accomplishment of thy great promise to all thy people, even that of a glorious resurrection, and of eternal happiness in thine heavenly presence ! And if any surviving friend should, when I am in the dust, meet with this memorial of my solemn transactions with thee, may he make the engagement his own ; and do thou graciously admit him to partake in all the blessings of thy covenant, through Jesus, the great mediator of it ; to whom, with thee, O Father, and thy holy Spirit, be everlasting praises ascribed, by all the millions who are thus saved by thee, and by all those other celestial spirits, in whose work and blessedness thou shalt call them to share.”

Jan. 1, 1800. Through the indulgent care of a kind Providence, I find myself entering upon a new year. O that a view of the unmerited mercies of my life might fill my heart with

unfeigned gratitude to the Author of my existence. I think it is my desire to begin this year with renewedly devoting myself to God. O thou, who alone art worthy of my supreme adoration, suffer me not to place my dependence for happiness on any thing below thee: but may the rich blessing with which thou art crowning my life, serve as a stream to lead me to thee the fountain of every excellence; and may I, by thy grace, be prepared for that life which shall not be measured by the revolutions of the sun! O may thine infinite mercy place me, though the most unworthy, among those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, where may my eternity be spent in bowing in the lowest prostration, and ascribing blessing, and honour, and thanksgiving, and praise to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever.

Jan. 5, Lord's Day. Through divine goodness, I am able to attend morning and evening service, and the sacrament of the supper; but how much reason have I to mourn over my cold heart, while I attempt to join the people of God in celebrating that love which is stronger than death. O may my flinty heart melt under a sense of the love of Christ to sinners.

Jan. 15. Take tea at Mr. *****'s, Newport. By Miss *****'s continual attention to us, one might suppose she knew the heart of a stranger. Mr. ——— entertains us with recounting the virtues of his friends, and the happy state of mind in which they left this vale of tears. It gives me pleasure to hear him speak of the happiness with which he anticipates leaving this world for the world of glory; and O what joy beams in his countenance, while he speaks of joining those in heaven who were so dear to him on earth.

We are requested to spend the evening with Mrs. ———. How much happier should I be in my closet, than in the houses of the great. O may I be kept from trifling away my precious time. I trust I felt my heart in some degree warmed with a faint view of the love of God this morning.

O for a glance of heavenly day,
To take this stubborn stone away.

Jan. 30. Pass the afternoon with Mrs. ———, in company with a large and brilliant circle of ladies and gentlemen. The conversation was on various subjects. O when will the happy time come, that holiness to the Lord shall be written upon every enjoyment. O that the whole company were acquainted with the religion of the holy Jesus. O suffer not my inactivity in thy blessed cause to prove a hindrance to others; but may I be quickened to greater diligence, and used as an instrument of thy glory.

Feb. 22. A day of public mourning throughout the United States, occasioned by the death of the illustrious Washington. "Earth's highest greatness ends in "here, he lies." May this solemn providence be sanctified to the nation.

Lord's Day, 23. Detained from public worship by indisposition. Find my mind uncommonly exercised with a view of sin and my total depravity. O may I be prepared, by grace divine, for that state where I shall sin no more. O thou Searcher of hearts, thou who knowest the wickedness in me, take it from me, and lead me in the way everlasting. O may I be cleansed from every sin. With delight I anticipate that blissful state, where

No vain discourse shall fill our tongue,
Nor trifles vex our ear ;
Infinite grace shall be our song,
And God delight to hear.

March 8. Conference meeting at our house. O may the infinite beauties of my divine Redeemer command my whole heart ! One youth came forward with a new song in his mouth. May this be the beginning of a glorious work of grace in this place.

Monday, 10. A large circle visit us in the evening. Retired in a gloomy frame. O Lord, thou art the God of my life, and the lengthener out of my days : condescend to forgive my sins, and enable me to put my trust in thee. Though thou art a God that hidest thyself, I confess thy justice ; for it is sin that hath separated between me and my God.

Thursday. Sorrow fills my heart, and all the enjoyments of life become tasteless, while my God hides his face from me.

Friday. I call in the day-time, but thou seemest not to regard my prayer ; and my nightly sighs may be justly rejected by thee.

Saturday. I fear I was never savingly interested in the love of Jesus. But if I am not, how can I account for this thirst for God, this ardent longing after holiness, and I trust this dread of sin ?

"Not all the glories of the earth
Can do me any good ;
My soul abhors all carnal mirth,
And groans to find my God."

Lord's Day morn. "I remembered God, and was troubled. I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed." With sentiments of gratitude may I be enabled to make mention of the goodness of the Lord, who has, I trust, once more enabled me to hope in his mercy. I find my mind sensibly relieved on reading the following passage of scripture. Isa. l. 10. Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant,

that walketh in darkness and hath no light ; let him trust, &c.

Aug. 10. My birth-day. How great, how distinguishing are the blessings of which I have been made the recipient the last year. This day is also the anniversary of my happy connexion with my dear Mr. ———. I trust I feel some emotions of gratitude for the unremitted favours conferred upon me. I feel, indeed, that I am a very great sinner ; but I desire to be constantly looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of my faith.

[The reader is apprised that should the Compiler of this Memoir follow her Diary and other papers, in which her exercises of mind are similarly described, he might form a volume instead of an appendix to a sermon. This circumstance will readily, and it is presumed, satisfactorily account for the incoherence of dates which must have been noticed in the foregoing extracts.]

Aug. 10, 1801. Through the mercy of God I am brought to another birth-day. But it becomes me to lie in the dust before my heavenly Benefactor, when I consider how little I have done for him the last year. Has not Jesus been saying of me, as he did in the days of his flesh concerning the barren fig-tree—Spare it this year—and yet what poor returns has he received from me ! O Lord, wilt thou be pleased to give me true evangelical repentance for all my sins, and forgive them for Jesus' sake : fill my heart with lively gratitude for the mercies of my past life ; and may I be enabled to dedicate myself anew, and unreservedly to the Lord, and to put my trust alone in him who is able to grant me future favours. This day is also the second anniversary of my connexion with ———. The unmerited and peculiar blessings which I have experienced the two years past, call for a tribute of unfeigned gratitude and praise. May Jesus bless my dear Mr. ———, and grant him grace to be faithful in his service, that he may glorify his sacred name here on earth, and receive a crown of immortal glory above the skies.

The last year has been productive of very important events to us. The Lord has been pleased to lend us a lovely little daughter, who seemed to promise all that our fondest wishes could frame respecting her. How often did her sweet smiles cheer the hearts of her parents ; and especially, what a source of comfort to her mother, when absent from the partner of her earthly cares. But, alas ! she is no more ! At the age of four months and twenty-two days, we were called to resign her into the hands of her heavenly Father.* I trust we had endeavoured to dedicate her to him in her earliest moments. But still we

* April 11, 1810, we were called to part with another truly amiable daughter, Abby-Eliza, aged 8 years and 4 months. This providence was suitably noticed by Mrs. C.

found it painful indeed when called to part with the lovely charge. How fondly did I anticipate teaching her to bend her infant knees before her great Creator, and in the early dawns of reason to tell her of the *Babe of Bethlehem*. But she now stands in no need of my feeble exertions or imperfect instructions. I trust she has exchanged this world of sin for the realms of immortal glory, where she already prostrates herself before her adorable Redeemer, and is ascribing praise and glory to him,

“For bringing her to that happy shore
She never saw nor sought before.”

July, 1806. I desire this evening to erect a monument to the mercy of God. He heareth prayer. Praised be his name. If I am not deceived, I do feel desirous to dedicate myself with all that I have, and am, O Lord, to be entirely thine. Use me for the purposes of thy glory, and it is enough. O Lord, do thou be pleased to bless my other better self. Take us, with our dear babes, into thy holy keeping. May we glorify thee in life, in death; and, through the unsearchable riches of divine grace, be received to be forever with the Lord. Amen.

Evidence in favour of my being in a renewed state. I could once say to the Redeemer of sinners, Go thy way for this time, and when I have a more convenient season I will call for thee; but now, if I am still destitute of an interest in him, it is my desire to make it my first business to seek his mercy. If I am not deceived, it is the language of my heart, Be thou my Prophet to teach me, my Priest to atone for my sins, my King to rule in and reign over me. I think it is my sincere desire that the Lord would search my heart—bad as it is, I do not wish to conceal a thought from him. I once had no taste for the society of Christians, but I now find their company and conversation my delight. I think I do at times long to be freed from sin. To be saved from sin, is the salvation I think I desire. I think I have seen, and do at times still see a beauty in holiness which eclipses all created excellence. I think I should choose to live devoted to CHRIST here, if I were sure of being banished from him hereafter.

Evidences against me. 1. The coldness of my love to Christ. 2. Spiritual deadness. 3. Ingratitude to God. 4. Want of love to the people of God, and want of zeal in the precious cause in which they are engaged. 5. The wanderings of my heart, and great propensity to sin, in thought, word and deed. 6. Want of concern for the glory of God. 7. Selfishness, which I fear is the moving cause of all my religious duties.

Should this paper fall into the hands of any person ignorant of the things of the Spirit of God, it may perhaps appear singular to him, more especially if he has been acquainted with the life and conversation of the deceased, that she should have used

such language respecting herself ; but it will be perfectly understood by all who know experimentally what Paul means in the following expressions : I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me, &c. Rom. vii. 21—25.

[The friends of the family and the public will, no doubt, expect some account of the last sickness and death of the subject of this Memoir.

During the summer past, her health generally had been in quite a delicate state ; it was, however, considerably improved by a journey the latter part of the season. But about the first of September she was attacked with a bilious fever, which was succeeded by a nervous fever, that terminated in dissolution. Several circumstances which occurred during her sickness, seemed evidently to have indicated the event. In the fore part of her sickness, she complained of darkness of mind—she requested prayers might be offered up for her—and that some portions of scripture might be selected for her, adapted to persons in such a state of mind. She very soon, however, remarked that there was a favourable change in her mind—that she seemed to have some light and comfort from the Scriptures. The following remarkable words of the apostle were particularly blessed to her at the time here alluded to. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ? She seemed to feed upon this interesting portion of divine truth. The offices of Christ, and his character as a Divine Saviour, were peculiarly interesting to her mind. Other parts of the word of God were blessed to her comfort, at different times during her sickness. The glory of God was evidently uppermost in her mind. She discovered a far greater anxiety to glorify God, than she did to recover her health. When this subject was brought into view, and the symptoms which were considered favourable in relation to such an event were enumerated, she would say—O I desire, most of all, that I might have grace to glorify God. I want the same religion to live by that I need to die by. O that I might be prepared to live or to die, as the will of the Lord may be concerning me !

She had enlarged views of the law of God, and deep and affecting views of sin ; and hence was led highly to prize the finished righteousness and adequate atonement of Christ, as the only foundation of her hope ; and to rejoice that salvation was by grace. But she assiduously cultivated the Christian temper, as a necessary evidence that she was saved by grace ; and imbibed the Spirit of Christ as a witness with her spirit that she was a child of God, and a joint-heir with Christ to a kingdom—an eternal weight of glory. She delighted in secret prayer, while in health, as there is abundant evidence to believe ; and she was much engaged in this exercise during her last sickness. She

spake of the preciousness of the gospel in a very feeling manner ; often saying—O let me bind this gospel to my heart. She earnestly recommended the scriptures to others, most affectionately inviting them to come to Christ. Her language was, O my dear husband, come to Christ—my dear children, come to Christ—O my dear neighbours and friends, come to Christ ; and whoever will, let him come and take of the waters of life freely.

She was remarkably particular as to family worship. In her last sickness, while others were tenderly and anxiously engaged in attending upon her, even to the omission of what some might perhaps have considered duties, she would request the family might be called together, and that the reading of the Scriptures and prayers might not be omitted ; adding—O let us not neglect these precious exercises ! She spake of the children whom she tenderly loved, and to whose education and happiness she was much devoted, in a calm and interesting manner, commending them to God and the word of his grace, as the never-failing source of comfort and consolation. She called her eldest daughter to her at one time, and, taking her by the hand, said—O my dear child, I have wished very much to talk to you, but have been of late and am still too weak to say much to you. But, O my child, do remember Jesus—I have told you of him, and now I entreat you to remember Jesus.

She discovered great resignation to the will of God. She said to her husband—O my precious, I hope I shall be resigned to the Divine will. I desire to have no will of my own, but to be entirely swallowed up in the will of God. Yet as it respects myself personally, I seem indifferent to the recovery of my health, but it is a distressing thought to me, to leave you to struggle alone in the world : and, with inexpressible feelings, said—I hope God will bless you and the children.

As the solemn scene drew near, she failed rapidly. For a few of her last days, her nervous system was much broken up ; and she was considerably bewildered at times in her mind. This appeared, however, to be occasioned by weakness of nerves, rather than any affection of the brain ; for she could evidently receive ideas from others, when the conversation was addressed directly to her, although she was unable correctly to answer them to any considerable extent. As she now became unable to communicate with mortals, and was evidently hastening to scenes of unutterable felicity and never-fading glory, the account of this most excellent woman and triumphant Christian must be closed by the following extracts from the day-book of her deeply-afflicted surviving partner in life.

Sept. 19, 1813. Lord's Day morning. At ten minutes past one o'clock, my dear Mrs. Collier departed this life, in hope of a blissful immortality. She died, as she had lived, happy in Jesus.

There is something interesting in the circumstance of time as to her death—the Lord's day. She has undoubtedly entered into *rest*. The day of her death is also the pledge of her resurrection. This is the day consecrated for the celebration of the resurrection of the Son of God ; and as he arose, so all his followers must. Blessed hope !

Sept. 20. Monday. The corpse remains with me—Precious relics ! Visit the chamber frequently through the day—It is good to behold her precious dust—but the moment hastens on, when it must be removed.

Sept. 21. This day I commit my other better self to the tomb—Impressive scene ! I have looked to this hour with the tenderest emotions and greatest anxieties, fearing it might be insupportable—but, O how good is our heavenly Father ! He has said, As thy days thy strength shall be. His promise has not failed me in this most trying period ; for, as I entered the chamber for the last time where the corpse was laid, these words fell with weight and comfort on my mind.

“ The parting scene will soon run o'er,
To join the saints who 're gone before :
We then shall meet to part no more.”

O then shall that ancient prophetic and apostolic saying that is written, come to pass—Death is swallowed up in victory.—Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

A very interesting circumstance occurred the fore part of the day after her decease : as it serves so simply, and at the same time so strikingly, to develop her character, its insertion requires no apology.

Our little son, between four and five years old, was much affected (as were all the other children) with the death of his dear mother. Observing the people going to meeting at the hour of public worship, he said to his father, Why do you not go to meeting, Pa ? it is time—the folks are going. His father replied, that his dear mother had died that morning, and he thought it his duty to stay at home with the children and family that day. Well, Pa, said the child, when you were gone to meeting on Sabbath-days, Mama used to take us into her chamber, and pray with us ; won't she talk to us and pray with us any more ?—O what a character is this given by a child, in his fifth year, of a mother, only a few hours after her decease. Let it be engraven upon the heart of every reader. Let parents, particularly mothers, pious mothers, be encouraged by this example of parental tenderness, to retire with their children, and converse and pray with them in secret. They will long remember it, and, it may be, will have cause to bless God for such deportment on the part of parents towards their children. It was for many years

the habit of the deceased to take the children apart from the family, converse with them a suitable time, and pray with them in secret.

It is far from the intention of the writer, to suggest any thing that should lead the reader to suppose the subject of this Memoir was perfect. She was indeed a sinner ; for the dishonours of death are upon her ; but she was a sinner saved by grace. Faults undoubtedly she had ; but as her most intimate friends and acquaintances know of none, they can mention none. They have all the evidence to believe she is now completely delivered from sin and imperfection, and that she is perfectly happy in the vision and fruition of God and the Lamb, that they can have here in this world. Should any one ask whence her felicity and victory came ? She would ascribe them not to her own innocence and circumspection, but to the blood of the Lamb, who was slain from the foundation of the world.

Grace, grace, was her delightful theme on earth ; and while the compiler of this imperfect, but sincere and affectionate tribute of respect to her precious memory, is wetting his paper with tears of melting tenderness, he feels a full persuasion, from his own knowledge of her heart, that could she once more communicate with him on earth, her language would be—Say nothing of me, but that I was a poor sinner, undone in myself, and saved only by the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Give all the glory to God.—Let every reader say, Amen.]

Rev. Mr. Collier,—My dear Sir,

Feeling, in common with an extensive circle of friends, a deep interest and sympathy with you in the late melancholy event which deprived you of your dearest earthly friend, and society of one of its fairest ornaments, I have committed some of my reflections on the subject to paper, and trust no apology will be deemed necessary for the liberty I have taken in enclosing them to you,—with a renewal of assurances of my affectionate regard.

L.

IN yonder garden bloom'd a ROSE, matur'd ;
Through *Spring* and *Summer* storms it had endur'd ;
And still it sweetly smil'd, and shed around
Its grateful fragrance o'er the favourite ground.
Pleas'd, I survey'd this fair and beauteous flower,
And trusted 'twould outlive rude *Autumn's* power :
I fondly hop'd its verdure would survive
Each shivering blast, 'till *Winter* should arrive.
Daily I gaz'd upon its blushing charms,
And oft I sav'd it from surrounding harms ;
But ah ! the ravages of one short hour,
Which levell'd to the dust my favourite flower !
Dark were the clouds that hover'd o'er the day,
And rude the blast that swept my hopes away !

Low on the ground all desolate it lies ;
 Chang'd are those tints that lately charm'd my eyes :
 Ruin seems written on each wither'd leaf—
 Headfast I gaz'd, and gave my soul to grief.

Ah ! I exclaim'd, in this fair flower I view
 A lively image of a FLOWER I knew.
 Of HER, who late in rosy health appear'd,
 Full in the circle of her friends endear'd ;
 Participating all their various care—
 In all their many trials claim'd a share :
 Who, when they sigh'd, o'erwhelm'd with pain or grief,
 Found the fair promise which convey'd relief—
 Now lying low upon the couch of death !
 Chill is her frame, and gone her vital breath !
 See weeping friends in deep-felt anguish mourn ;
 See hope extinct—and hear her final groan !
 "How," I exclaim, as on her form I gaze,
 "Can RUIN show thy glory—sing thy praise ?"
 When to my view what wondrous scenes appear,
 What heavenly accents charm my ravish'd ear !
 For lo! descending from the throne on high,
 A guard of seraphs pierce the azure sky :
 Swift to her mansion, wing'd with love, they come,
 To bear her safe to her eternal home.
 The seraph band support her as she flies,
 The seraph band transport her to the skies !
 Ent'ring the shining portals—Oh, what joys
 Each raptur'd power and faculty employs,
 While through the shining ranks she's borne along,
 Welcom'd by each of all the blissful throng,
 'Till near the throne—but ah ! th' attempt how vain.
 Immortal salutations to explain * * * * *

Yet still the recollection swells my heart
 With grief too great for language to impart :
 I look around upon my infant train,
 Who seek maternal counsel, but in vain ;
 Whose streaming eyes *to me alone* are rais'd,
 On whom maternal fondness lately gaz'd :
 They ask for her, whose animating smile
 Rejoic'd their little troubles to beguile.
 * * * * *

'Twas on the morning of the holy day,
 Her dear remains within the mansion lay ;
 The morning bell proclaim'd th' accustom'd time,
 When I went forth to preach the word divine :
 The hour pass'd by—I sat in musing thought,
 Rememb'ring that "the Lord maintain'd my lot :"
 Rich consolations check'd my flowing grief ;
 For, mid the *judgment, mercy* flew to my relief !
 "She bath'd my anguish'd bosom with her tears,"
 Check'd a deep sigh, and much allay'd my fears.—
 My infant train in silence sat around,
 And, save their sighs, I heard no other sound.—
 My little boy the mournful silence broke,
 In plaintive accents ; and, in tears, he spoke—
 "Where is *Mama* ?" "She's gone to yonder skies,"
 The afflicted father, whelm'd in tears, replies.
 "When she was here, and *Pa* was gone away,
 "To attend the meeting, and to preach and pray,
 "She us'd to go with sisters and with me,
 "Into the room where none but God can see ;

" And there she told us we must shortly die,
 " And then our bodies in the ground would lie !
 " She told of Jesus, and his precious blood—
 " That he would pardon us, and make us good :
 " Then, kneeling down, and teaching us to kneel,
 " Told God of all she in her heart did feel.
 " She ask'd him to be kind to us and you,
 " And shed his grace on us, like morning dew.
 " When she had pray'd, she wip'd away a tear,
 " And kiss'd us all, and smil'd, and look'd so dear"—
 * * * * *

Gazing upon this ruin, I exclaim'd,
 " Can such a scene by *Wisdom* be ordain'd ?
 " From DESOLATION'S TOMB can GLORY spring ?
 " And will the *silent grave* thy praises sing ?"—
 But lo ! amid the shining ranks above,
 A form I see—the form of her I love,
 Full in the centre of the angel choir :
 Lo ! in her hand I see a golden lyre !
 But oh ! how chang'd ! Celestial glories shine,
 Celestial garlands round her brows entwine !
 Immortal youth now mantles in her face,
 O'er her fair form is shed supernal grace !
 What notes are these that swell upon my ear ?
 Immortal music, heavenly strains I hear !
 Oh ! 'tis her charming animating voice,
 Chanting sweet anthems and immortal joys.—
 Sudden she turns her radiant eyes on mine ;
 Through their bright orbs divine compassions shine :
 And as *alone* she sees me struggling here,
 " Drops on her golden harp a pitying tear !"
 Then kindly cheers me with her well-known voice ;
 And thus she speaks, and bids my heart rejoice :
 " Know, 'mid the glories of this heavenly place,
 " You, dear companion of my earthly race,
 " Live in my kind remembrance ; and I find
 " Your name is still engrav'd upon my mind.
 " When in yon " vale of tears," it was my joy
 " To make you happy—'twas my sweet employ ;
 " So sweet, that my fond heart, too much engross'd,
 " Much of my *heavenly life*, I know, was lost ;
 " And all in mercy was the message sent—
 " Oh ! then submit—be with your lot content ;
 " For still our glorious Friend, the Saviour lives,
 " Sustaining grace, all needful strength, he gives ;
 " And, though he calls you trials to endure,
 " *His own right arm will make your conquest sure !*
 " And know, my kind and ever " precious," know,
 " Shortly you too will quit yon vale of wo.
 " Oh ! what new raptures fire my inmost soul,
 " To think that I can now your griefs console.
 " To me 'tis given, to wipe the falling tear ;
 " With you and ours I am forever near :
 " *I am your guardian angel*—that deep sigh
 " Enter'd my heart ; for I, my dear, was nigh :
 " That gushing tear I witness'd ere it fell !—
 " Then all your sorrows and each fear dispel ;
 " For I am with you, and our infant train
 " Shall be my care 'till we shall meet again."